

Balloons & Confetti: November 2023

Many of the most used Stamford public parks are located right on the Long Island Sound. Balloons and confetti used in parks often pollute the environment and water, causing harm to birds, fish, turtles, whales, dolphins, and other animals. Because they break down into tiny pieces of microplastics in the environment, these materials can end up hundreds of miles away. Untreated storm water from other inland parks also ends up in the Long Island Sound, compounding the problem of debris in bodies of water.

Why are Balloons bad for the environment?

- Mylar balloons do not biodegrade, while latex balloons are sold as biodegradable to be safe to release into the air, but latex balloons are the type most found in the stomachs of dead animals.¹ Some studies question if latex balloons do biodegrade.
- Balloons break down into fragments and animals often mistake the fragments for food. They can choke and even suffocate when they try to eat them. Partially inflated balloons can block animals' gastrointestinal tract causing them to starve to death slowly and painfully.²
- Shorebirds and other animals can become entangled in balloon remnants - many birds have been found dead with bits of Mylar, latex, or string wrapped around their necks, beaks, or legs.³
- Countless dolphins, whales, and sea turtles beach themselves and die every year after ingesting deflated balloons, which can resemble jellyfish - one of their regular food sources. Even land animals who graze on vegetation can accidentally ingest balloon parts.⁴
- Balloons break down to [microplastics](#).
- Another concern is that helium is a nonrenewable resource with many crucial industrial, medical and scientific uses, such as in MRIs, superconductors and weather balloons. The U.S. is fortunate to be rich in helium; we produce 40% of the gas worldwide. But there is a global helium shortage, and projections of future helium demand indicate that we will face serious limitations in the helium supply within only a few decades.⁵
- [U.S. Fish & Wildlife: Please Don't Release Your Balloons](#) (See photos)
- May cause fires and/or electric outages when stuck in power lines.

Connecticut Current Balloon Law:

Chapter 490 Sec. 26-25c. Release of lighter-than-air balloons restricted. Penalty. (a) No person, nonprofit organization, firm or corporation, including the state and its political subdivisions, shall knowingly release, organize the release of or intentionally cause to be released into the atmosphere within a twenty-four-hour period ten or more helium or other lighter-than-air gas balloons in the state.

(b) Any violation of subsection (a) of this section shall be an infraction.

In 2023, the CT House of Representatives tried to ban the release of a single helium-filled balloon that passed 137-5 in the house but failed to get a vote in the senate.

Connecticut DEEP State Park Picnic Shelter Rental Policies:

[Helium balloons are strongly discouraged](#), but if used, they must not be released, and must be disposed of properly.

¹ <https://balloonsblow.org>

² <https://www.peta.org/teachkind/humane-classroom/teach-students-about-harmful-balloon-releases/>

³ <https://www.peta.org/teachkind/humane-classroom/teach-students-about-harmful-balloon-releases/>

⁴ <https://www.peta.org/teachkind/humane-classroom/teach-students-about-harmful-balloon-releases/>

⁵ <https://www.caryinstitute.org/news-insights/feature/helium-balloons-impose-toll-our-air-land-and-sea>

States that have Balloon Release Laws:

- California
- Delaware
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Maine
- Maryland
- Rhode Island
- Tennessee
- Virginia

Cities that have balloon laws:

- Huntsville, AL
- San Francisco, CA
- [Boca Raton: Prohibition of balloons and confetti](#), [Pinellas County](#), FL
- Louisville, KY: [Release of Balloons](#)
- Ocean City, Queen Anne's County, Wicomico County, MD
- Chatham: [Prohibition on sale and Use of Balloons](#), Evertt: [Release of Balloons](#), Nantucket: [Ban on Helium filled Balloons](#), Provincetown: Prohibition of helium-filled balloons, MA
- Atlantic City, Bradley Beach, Brigantine, Cape May City, Egg Harbor, Long Beach Township, Longport, North Wildwood, Sea Isle City, Somers Point, Upper Township, Ventnor, NJ
- East Hampton, NY: [Balloons](#)
- Wrightsville Beach, NC: [Unlawful Release of Balloons](#)
- Block Island: Law prohibits the sale and use of balloons throughout the town, RI
- Galveston, TX: [Intentional Release of Balloons](#)
- Bainbridge Island, WA

[Experts say more cities should join the growing legislative trend to reduce trash, save birds and protect against wildfires.](#)

Alternatives to balloons:

- Paper streamers, tissue paper pom-poms, flags, kites, paper lanterns.

Why is Confetti bad for the environment?

- Metallic confetti is not biodegradable.
- Plastic confetti is not biodegradable and breaks down into [microplastics](#).
- Contains microplastic that is harmful to animal health and to the water.
- Because a lot of confetti is shiny, birds, turtles, fish and other animals mistakenly think it is food causing them harm.
- Paper confetti is biodegradable (a few months) but there has been concern over the dye used and chemical exposure in the environment as its breaking down.
- It is litter.

Connecticut DEEP State Park Picnic Shelter Rental Policies:

[Confetti](#), rice or other scattering materials in or around a picnic shelter is prohibited.

Cities that have Confetti Laws/Park Rules & Regulations:

- Mobile: [Bans Plastic Confetti](#), AL
- Waterbury: [Park Rules and Regulations](#), CT
- Boca Raton: [Prohibition of balloons and confetti](#), [Pinellas County](#), FL
- [Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park](#) (scroll down to Picnic Pavilion)
- Hutto: [18.02.002 Prohibited items and activities \(h\)](#), TX

Alternatives to confetti:

- Biodegradable confetti made out of dried flowers and leaves or birdseed.

Kosciuszko Park: Morning of September 5, 2023 with metal confetti all over grass by pavilion.

This LITTER must be picked up by the park employees, wasting taxpayer's money.

